

Human Events *A Weekly Analysis for the American Citizen*

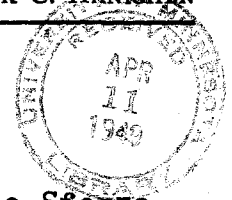
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VOL. VI, NO. 14, Issue Number 271, APRIL 6, 1949

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ITALY SIGNS THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE

by George Popoff



It was truly an extraordinary development when Count Carlo Sforza, the Italian Foreign Minister, placed his signature on the so-called North Atlantic Treaty, in Washington on April 4.

Italy is not a North Atlantic, but a Mediterranean, Power. So the official designation of the new military alliance becomes inaccurate even before ratification of the treaty by which it is established. But even more remarkable is the fact that Italy, a major partner of the Central European "Axis", is now defensively allied with its recent enemies against their recent ally -- Soviet Russia.

Of course the Italian people are not unaccustomed to diplomatic somersaults of this character. The country which produced Machiavelli has little to learn about the tortuous, cynical and immoral game of power politics. The present volte face, however, is so extreme that one may well ask, and attempt to answer, the question of how it is regarded by objective minds in Rome.

II

One may argue at length about whether the hen or the egg came first. But there can be no doubt that all of Western Europe was first frightened to death by Russia's expansionist moves and that only afterwards, as a natural reaction, came the various defensive measures culminating in the present treaty of alliance among twelve governments.

The terrifying reports circulated by Russian propaganda agencies are only too familiar to the Italians: "The Soviet Union has formed a special army of German prisoners, now ready to march with the Russians against the West." "Behind the Iron Curtain no less than 190 well armed Russian divisions are assembled and ready to strike." "Should the Red Army start its blitz, the Soviet tanks will reach the English Channel in three days."

And even before the invitation to sign the Defense Pact was extended to Italy, people here were presented with a fresh budget of similarly menacing news: "The Supreme Soviet in Moscow has approved a mighty military budget of over 79 billion rubles." "In Bulgaria, Russian troops are concentrated preparatory to separating Macedonia from Greece." "Russian parachute troops are being dropped by night into Albania, preliminary to forcing Yugoslavia back into the Eastern bloc."

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The first wave of intimidating rumors had a perhaps unanticipated effect on Italy, standing practically defenseless on Russia's present frontier. Just a year ago, on April 18, 1948, an overwhelming majority of the Italian people gave its vote to an outspoken anti-Communist Government, charging this government with the precise duty of defending Italy against the menaces of Russian Communism and Slav imperialism. Subsequent Russian pressure has now had a similar result. During March, the Italian people -- through their parliamentary representatives -- with another great majority decided in favor of accepting the invitation to join the Atlantic Alliance. This is the more noteworthy because a good many strongly anti-Communist Italians have been dubious about the utility of this and the other defense pacts.

So the Italian democracy emerges from this debate very much strengthened. And the Italian people have demonstrated -- in a most impressive way -- that the Communists are wrong in claiming that the political mood of Italy has greatly changed during the last twelve months. There can be no doubt whatever that the Italian people, if called once more to the ballot boxes, would today express themselves against Communism and the Eastern bloc with at least as heavy a majority as was piled up a year ago.

III

The last trace of doubt, as to whether or not Italy should sign the Atlantic Pact, was dispelled by the Communists themselves. There was a decisive reaction to Togliatti's declaration that in case of a new war "the Italian people will, without a moment's hesitation, side with Russia and help the advancing Red Army with all possible means". The object of this threat, by the leader of the Italian Communists, was to represent Italy in American eyes as an untrustworthy ally and in this way to keep Italy out of the defense system of the Western Powers. The actual effect of this last Communist maneuver was to make Italy a charter member of the Atlantic Alliance.

It is not for me to estimate the effect of Italian Communist threats on American thinking. But the impression gained here in Rome is that Washington analyzed Togliatti's defiance about as follows: "Should Italy really be menaced by Communist revolution, and should it be in the interests of the Western Powers to defend Italy in case of war, then it would surely be best to include that country at once in the defense system of the West and thereby remove all doubts about this question." The majority of Italians on their part reasoned with equal logic: "Such declarations as that by Togliatti, and the entire anti-American and pro-

Russian propaganda of the Communists, have altogether destroyed all basis for a policy of neutrality. Italy can no longer choose between three possibilities, but only between two alternatives -- joining the East or joining the West." And with the question thus narrowed down, every doubt about the decision to be taken vanished.

Italian membership in the Atlantic Alliance of course means a further sharpening of the bitter inner political struggle in Italy. This is already demonstrated by the latest Communist riots and demonstrations, a portent of trouble still to come.

After their defeat in the matter of the Defense Pact, the Communists now threaten the Italian Government with the unwelcome fact that "behind Togliatti are massed no less than eight million Italians, all of them bitterly opposed to a policy of military collaboration with the Western Powers and all of them prepared to fight against it to the utmost". The struggle started in the Parliament, announces the Communist paper Unita, will be continued "in factories, offices, shops, mines, towns and villages". The Communists intend to mobilize against the policy of the Government "the decisive part of the Italian people". With their help "it will be made impossible for the De Gasperi Government to produce arms and to use them against the Soviet Union, the only defender of the peoples and their freedom and independence . . ."

Those and similar Communist threats the De Gasperi Government naturally does not take too tragically. Nevertheless, the bitterness and the intensity, on both sides, of the Italian debate over the Atlantic Treaty, has once more clearly emphasized a most regrettable fact. This is that the general situation in Italy is still dominated by fear -- by the inner political fear of the terroristic methods of Italy's own Communists and by the outward fear of the aggressive attitude of Soviet Russia. And this estimate is the reluctant judgment of all responsible Italian politicians, whenever one has occasion to speak with them privately and frankly.

IV

Inside the country this fear is now being successfully fought both by the sound economic and social measures of the Government and by the efforts and energy of the able Minister for the Interior, Mario Scelba. His newly organized and trustworthy police have lately rendered a particularly great service to the country by investigating political murders and other crimes committed by the Communists during the period of underground resistance towards the close of the war. This beneficial

action by the Ministry of the Interior has given a great number of hitherto terrorized and frightened citizens the necessary courage to come forward as accusers and witnesses against the Communist criminals. The emphasis on Justice is doing much to end the internal reign of terror.

But the fear of Soviet Russia which pervades all Italy now is more difficult to combat. In view of the dreadful nearness of the Iron Curtain, the doubtful situation in Yugoslavia, the guerrilla warfare in Greece, the whole situation on the Adriatic Coast presents to Italy a most dangerous and alarming aspect. American and other foreign diplomats in Rome openly express the opinion that "on the Adriatic serious developments may occur at any moment". They would not occur, however, if here, too, a "Democratic Police" could keep guard and stop, should it be necessary, any criminal aggressor.

The Atlantic Alliance -- one has been assured -- will be followed by American military aid. How this can be combined with the disarmament clauses of the Italian Peace Treaty remains to be seen. Maybe, say the Italians, the United States will further strengthen her naval forces in this particularly delicate sector of the Mediterranean. That is what the Communists and Russians fear most. But their fear is security for Western Europe.

The signing of the Atlantic Alliance coincides with the ending of the first year of the European Recovery Program. The anniversary brought forth grateful tributes from the political leaders of all the assisted governments, acclaiming the generosity of the American people. Much has been accomplished by the work of the Economic Co-operation Administration, especially in developing a greater sense of employment security than was the case in Western Europe a year ago. Political security, however, is not yet achieved and it is in the hope of achieving that objective that Count Sforza was authorized to sign the new treaty for Italy.

By joining the Atlantic Alliance the De Gasperi Government has increased, as far as it can, the security of Italy. At the present moment, for Italy and indeed all of Western Europe, this is the decisive matter. For only from the egg of security can creep out, one day, the dove of Peace.

George Popoff serves as the Rome Correspondent of HUMAN EVENTS.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to Human Events*

Vol. VI, No. 14

By Frank C. Hanighen

April 6, 1949

TRUMAN: Like Odysseus, the President looks -- or thinks he looks -- wiser when he is seated. Hence his publicized diligence at his desk and his reported armchair conferences in the Blair House. All this, of course, indicates prudence, after his reverses on Capitol Hill. But does it mean conciliation? It may only be the excitability of Washington correspondents, but there is a crop of rumors about a change in the Presidential attitude towards the "do nothing" Congress. For instance, it is said that several private dinners are being arranged in the Hotel Congressional to bring together Truman and the men on the Hill (or, should we say, the fierce untamed "hill men"). And Mr. William Bray (an old Farley man) is supposed to act as liaison with the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue. These reports suggest that the White House may proffer the beaker of peace to the Southerners.

Perhaps. But it would be unwise to discount the strain of stubbornness in the Truman character. Last week, the press asked him whether he had altered his ideas on the necessity for economic controls. A more supple executive would have conceded that the economic barometer had changed a bit, and that he was reassessing the situation. But, no, the President set his jaw and stuck to his original demand for controls. Yet Congressman Spence, sponsor of the notorious "crypto-Socialism" bill, is reportedly seeking orders from the White House to pigeonhole the proposal -- and in vain. The unfortunate Senate Majority Leader Lucas -- uniquely a leader without a majority -- was heard importuning Vice-President Barkley, "Now, Alben, let's get a program we can put through." But Barkley with a wearied shrug only replied, "Well, you were down there, you heard what he said." And Senator Lucas disconsolately returned to his desk to watch Minority Leader Wherry marshal the majority composed of Republicans and Southern Democrats. It is, indeed, a queer impasse between Legislature and Executive.

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TAFT: We hear that CIO lobbyists on Capitol Hill take a black view of their chances of "repeal of Taft-Hartley". One diligent corridor chaser we know concedes that Senator Taft will obtain substantially what he wants in the final draft of the Labor legislation. It is an interesting sidelight that these CIO lobbyists are already talking with a sort of bitter satisfaction about Truman's plight in case Taft wins. (This attitude is indicative of a revival of the anti-Truman Leftist sentiment in the Democratic Party which opposed his nomination last spring.) Then -- the lobbyists remark -- the President will writhe on the painful horns of a dilemma. If he vetoes a Taft-sponsored bill, even a compromise, the original Taft-Hartley Act will remain in force. If he doesn't veto such a compromise, it will become a law to the intense discontent of the labor union leaders.

Win or lose in his legislative battle, Taft still must fight another, and crucial one, next year at the polls, for re-election. His friends are already working and planning. And the Administration is already preparing to throw literally everything into a big effort to retire the man who symbolizes all the policies the White House hates. The Democratic High Command wants Governor Lausche to run against Taft, on the ground that he would be an unbeatable candidate. However, out in Ohio it is reported that some Democratic politicians oppose the naming of Lausche as Senatorial nominee and prefer that he run for re-election as Governor. They argue that as nominee for Governor he would head the Democratic ballot, and would thereby carry the slate to victory; as Senatorial nominee his name would be placed far down on the ballot sheet and would fail to influence a sufficient number of voters.

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UNITED NATIONS: The most realistic remark in all the florid oratory given at the ceremony of the signing of the Atlantic Pact was that of Netherlands Foreign Minister, Dirk U. Stikker. He commenced his speech with the following: "The Treaty we are about to sign marks the end of an illusion: the hope that the United Nations would, by itself, ensure international peace." After Churchill's hardly encouraging references to the UN in his speech last week, Stikker's statement should serve as a tombstone for that extraordinary organization at Lake Success. Of course, the American people always seem much more ready to accept unpalatable truths from a foreigner than from native debunkers. Nevertheless, in most of the press comment we have seen, there is noticeable a reluctance to face up to the facts, a sort of wounded silence on the matter of UN failure.

We recall in this connection J. M. Keynes' observation on the Versailles Peace Conference. Lloyd George, he said, discovered to his horror that it was harder to debamboozle Wilson than it had been to bamboozle him. And so it is with the legend of the UN in the minds of the American people. HUMAN EVENTS from the beginning characterized the UN as absolutely unworkable. But the force of a prodigious propaganda campaign for its ratification smothered any efforts at a critical examination. The UN was not only sold, but oversold, and so well that even now, despite Churchill and Stikker, there is an unwillingness to face the facts. Many who, during the last two years, awoke and rubbed their eyes, have been laboring to alter the UN setup -- an unpromising effort. The Soviet Union ensconced in a bombproof bastion has always been able to repel these efforts. Today, at the UN Assembly meeting at Lake Success, the Soviets are in a strong legal position to argue the incompatibility between the Atlantic Pact and the sacrosanct UN Charter.

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EUROPEAN AID: In the ECA debate, the syllables of Messrs. Connally and Vandenberg give the comforting impression that by 1952 the \$17 billion Peruna of foreign aid will have put Europe back on its feet, no longer thereafter to be a mendicant at our door. The London Economist has sought to dispel this pretty dream. After a thorough study of the whole situation the British journal (January 5) summed up: "Whatever its labors . . . Western Europe cannot achieve a balance by 1952 on the basis of its present plans, of its present standards of living, and of the existing conditions of world trade. This means, of course, that the Marshall Plan, in the rather simple form originally conceived cannot succeed within the time originally set." The Economist buttresses its argument with a historical review showing that Europe's economic plight is no "temporary phenomenon brought about by the dislocations of war". Europe was once the world's chief supplier of goods, and its wealth was fed in part by income from foreign investments. That happy state has gone and no new economic foundation has yet been built to replace it.

This sensible appraisal by the Economist came to mind the other day when we read an interesting pamphlet gotten out by the Committee for Constitutional Government, entitled "Can America Support a Multiplying Europe?" Far be it from us to shake the specter of Malthus, but Guy Irving Burch, author of the pamphlet, does present some rather brooding statistics. He reminds us that despite the loss of lives in World War II, the European population has increased by 14 millions in the last decade and it is expected to increase 22 million more in the next ten years. Meanwhile, America's population continues to mount and most of the 16 countries receiving Marshall aid have sharply increased their birth rates. Even before World War II, remarks Burch, the industrial countries of Europe imported nearly one third of their wheat and Europe as a whole has only 1.1 acres of cultivated land per person. "How is the increasing population of Europe", asks Burch, "to support itself on a democratic basis after the Marshall Plan expires?" It is being realized more and more that the billions of dollars that the U.S. spent upon lend-lease and

relief in foreign lands "are not so much paper dollars, but represent tons of American top soil, vast quantities of mineral resources, forests and water reserves and wildlife". This is a foreboding picture which the advocates of all-out ECA cannot successfully shrug off with retorts of "isolationist".

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EUROPEAN RECOVERY: Dr. Karl Brandt, one of America's most distinguished economists, dropped in the office the other day en route home to Palo Alto after a year's study and investigation in Germany. What he had to say gives us hope that the gloomy picture painted in the foregoing item may be altered. Dr. Brandt reports that the currency reform has transformed the face of Germany and released constructive forces. Production has been rising sharply and the whole atmosphere stands in happy contrast to that of a year ago. Economic authorities in Frankfurt now are so optimistic that they see a possibility of Germany attaining the production level of 1936 within three months. Brandt finds no reason why Western Germany should not become self-supporting in the next few years -- assuring that there is a free flow of world trade. The Doctor, however, admits that this is quite an assumption.

From his observations and other information, it becomes clearer every day that what Europe needs far more than ERP handouts is a customs union. Benelux has been given much publicity -- too much publicity. But observers minimize its importance and stress another effort in free trade which has been all too little discussed. This is the Franco-Italian treaty of economic co-operation. It was noticed this week in Washington that Count Carlo Sforza, Italian Foreign Minister, drew attention to this treaty in his speech at the Atlantic Pact celebration. Many economists find more hope in the Franco-Italian pact, which projects a customs union between the two countries, than in any other development. It should provide a big lift not only to the economies of these two nations but to other parts of Europe as well. It should do so -- if the French bureaucracy does not sabotage it.

Dr. Brandt in his talk with us deplored the continued dismantling of German industry. In Berlin he saw the machinery of a large dismantled factory awaiting shipment to (of all places) Czechoslovakia. This fact was confirmed by Dr. Ernst Reuter, Mayor of Berlin, during his recent visit to Washington. He confessed that he was unable to understand this sort of business. Nor can we.

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HAGUE CONVENTION: Men are being condemned to death and executed in Germany and Japan because they violated the Land Warfare Regulations of the Hague Convention. At least, these are the pretenses on which the present international "kangaroo courts" base their decisions. Yet those who presume to condemn them are themselves guilty of infringing the Hague rules. We have just received copies of documents exchanged by the British Military Government and German local authorities. These latter were so bold as to cite the Hague Convention of 1907 in protest against dismantling of German factories. As an example of the double standard that exists in Allied "justice" we quote the following answer from General Robertson, British commander in Germany, to these German authorities:

"These rules [the Hague Convention] are, however, not applicable to the present occupation. The present occupation of Germany has no exact precedent and such a situation was never envisaged by the authors of the Hague Convention. There is no German Government, supreme authority in Germany is exercised by the Four Commanders in Chief, each in his own Zone of Occupation, and also jointly in matters affecting Germany as a whole. In view of the supreme authority vested in them, there is no limit on their powers save those which they choose to adopt." [Emphasis ours.]

Book Events

The Limitations of Science, by J. W. N. Sullivan. New York: The New American Library. 35 cents. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

The change of spiritual climate from the heady optimisms of the Nineteenth Century to the apocalyptic terrors of our own age is well reflected in the popular disillusion with scientific rationalism. All the fashionable philosophies of our generation, such as Bergsonism, Freudianism and Existentialism, are at bottom wholly irrational, even when, as in the case of psychoanalysis, they choose to wear a scientific mask. Thus the recent defenses of the autonomy of science by Professor Sidney Hook and others seem archaic and, in a sense, reactionary. Earl Russell evinced a much better understanding of the contemporary mood when he said that if scientists were not now indispensable to purposes of politicians and generals, they would find themselves the victims of popular persecution everywhere in the world.

The leader writer of the Literary Supplement of the Times of London, commenting upon Lord Russell's statement, observed that the popular revulsion to science and scientists is inspired by something more than the dread of recent inventions and extends to the whole class of intellectuals. The rise of professional thinkers to a place of great influence and power in Society has increased the suspicion with which the clever have always, and perhaps justly, been regarded by the simple. It has also invoked all those jealousies and fears that make the exercise of power so hazardous. At the same time the professionalizing of science and letters has had the effect of segregating their practitioners from the mass of Society and of infecting them with the sin of hubris. It has encouraged them to believe and to persuade others that the scientific principles that have proved so useful in the exploitation of inanimate nature can be applied with equally beneficent results to human nature, especially in the realm of politics. But in politics the scientific intellectual, who is under the same necessity as in the laboratory to confirm his theories by empirical demonstration, finds himself thwarted by the human contumacy which has defeated so many brilliantly conceived plans for universal happiness. Thus to control his experiment he is constrained to demand more and more power and in the end to subordinate his original purpose to the maintenance of his power. Thus in the evolution of the modern State, with its formula of happiness by coercion, we may observe the transformation of the intellectuals from a professional class into a governing elite. Science and letters become subservient to politics for the simple reason that the scientist and the writer have become politicians. But the intellectual who has made scientific theory the pretext for an arrogation of power finds himself unable to abandon his theory when further experiment and investigation have discredited it, for the theory has congealed into dogma. Thus we have the paradox of a Society scientifically organized upon postulates that science has abandoned, an ironic example of what the Marxists have called the "cultural lag".

All this becomes clear in the reading of Professor Sullivan's book, first published more than seventeen years ago, and now reissued in this chapbook edition. For although he says barely a word about politics, Professor Sullivan shows us that the scientific assumptions upon which the Socialist revolution has been proceeding have been overthrown by the metaphysical revolution within science itself. One such assumption was that the scientific method affords the only reliable knowledge of reality; another, that the whole of reality is comprehended in matter and motion. Science, he tells us, so far from having kept its promise to eradicate mystery from the universe has multiplied it. Thus a large share of the sovereignty of knowledge that science formerly claimed for itself, including the province of politics, must now be restored to philosophy and religion, whose regions of inquiry it sought to pre-empt.

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